Group Outline for Final Project

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A. Introduction (with thesis statement) - Aidan

Although New York State lists most species of herps (herpetofauna) that occur in the state protected from collection, there is no current management of their populations and only small efforts being done to monitor their populations. In its place community driven efforts have led the way in population observations and protection during migration. Many of these species can only survive in specific environments and have populations that are required to cross busy roads during their migration. Herpetofauna numbers are on a general decline so New York’s system of managing reptiles and amphibians is in need of revision.

B. Background - John

At least 70 species of amphibians and reptiles, collectively known as herps, are thought to live in New York State. In the 1990s, the DEC undertook an effort to collect population data on as many species as possible across the state. This project was known as the Herp Atlas Project. Combining new data of species distributions found during the project with existing data from previous decades, the DEC had its best collection of herp information. However, no more projects have been conducted since to keep herp population data updated. In the wake of the Atlas project, other organizations have taken over. The New York Amphibian & Reptile Survey (NYARS) is a collaboration of multiple college institutions to develop a platform for anybody to submit observations of herp sightings across the state (DEC₁ n.d. ).

Although herp population data is lacking at the state level, many regulations are already in place for how the public can interact with them. Hunting of all native snakes, lizards and salamanders is prohibited, as is the hunting of any species of turtle besides the snapping turtle. Snapping turtles can be harvested from July 15th to September 30th, while most frog species can be harvested from June 15th to September 30th (DEC₂ n.d. ).

C. 3-5 Main points - Celebrity

One way the NY DEC has managed herpetofauna populations is through the Herp Atlas Project. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation, data from before 1989 in addition to the Amphibian & Reptile Atlas Project were used to determine where various herps are located today. The Project survey was conducted over a ten year period from 1990 to 1999. However, no further surveys have been done to determine herpetofauna range since then.

Another way herps are managed is through hunting. The Department of Environmental Conservation has specific regulations on how turtles, lizards, frogs, snakes, and salamanders are to be hunted. Lizards, snakes, and salamanders cannot be owned or hunted. The same goes for all turtles except for snapping turtles for which a bow or firearm must be used with a hunting license in possession. Frogs may be hunted using a bow or gun under a hunting license, but clubs, hands, spears, or hooks require a fishing license. There are also regulations regarding area, bag amount, hours, season, and size for all game.

A final way the NY DEC manages amphibians and reptiles is through the AM&RC Project. The Department of Conservation explains the Amphibian Migrations and Road Crossings Project helps herpetofauna with their mating season migrations as habitat fragmentation can be an issue for them. The AM&RC Project not only ensures safety and reproductive success for herps, but also allows for data on habitat to be collected.

D. Conclusion - Will

The state should be more involved in herp management, especially in collection of population data. Additionally, due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate herp metrics; volunteer work and overall awareness of how one can get involved should be emphasized more.

3 potential subject experts with contact information -Will, Kyle

1. Jess Proctor (Diversity of Life TA)
2. Jess Proctor said she could get us in contact with more experts
3. Dr. James Gibbs

Literature Cited (at least 5 preliminary references)

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7140.html>

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/vertchklst0410.pdf>

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/31339.html>

<https://www.nyherps.org/about>

<https://www.nyfoa.org/application/files/5714/7948/5862/VertebratesofNYList.pdf>

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/51925.html> DEC road crossings

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/huntguidesmallgame.pdf>

DEC₁, N. (n.d.). Herp Atlas Project - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7140.html>.

DEC₂, N. (n.d.). Reptile and Amphibian Hunting Seasons - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/31339.html>.

Amphibian Migrations and Road Crossings - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. (n.d.). .<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/51925.html>.